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ABSTRACT

The paper describes the North Providence (Rhode Island) High School Honors Curriculum, which provides academically gifted juniors and seniors with indepth training in specific academic areas. Specific selection procedures and eligibility criteria are set forth, along with appeals procedures for students. Course descriptions, specific eligibility factors, and work requirements are described for American history, calculus, chemistry, English (taught in conjunction with the English department at Rhode Island College), humanities, and political science. The program also offers individualized learning programs, an independent study approach which may include a contract with a faculty member, a seminar, or coursework at a local college. Sample forms are appended. (CL)

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North Providence Honors Curriculum

by

Edward J. Day

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NORTH PROVIDENCE HIGH SCHOOL HONORS CURRICULUM
PROJECT H.A.I.L. (HONORS AND INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING)

I. PHILOSOPHY:

The philosophy of North Providence High School states that it is a comprehensive high school that seeks to educate all students, so that each has the opportunity to develop his individual academic potential to the greatest possible extent. In keeping with this general philosophy, the North Providence School Department recognizes that there are some students at the high school who would meet the generally accepted definition of gifted, and like all other students, must be serviced by the high school curriculum. To provide this service, the School Committee, the Superintendent, and the Curriculum Advisory Committee, has approved the development of an Honors Curriculum for North Providence High School.

Project HAIL attempts to provide academically superior juniors and seniors with an opportunity to expand their knowledge beyond the confines of the regular curriculum. The Honors Curriculum does not attempt to isolate these gifted students from their peers, but rather seeks to challenge them to perform at a higher level of excellence than that demanded by the regular curriculum, while at the same time providing the social setting necessary for the development of a healthy personality.

Since the Honors Curriculum by its very nature is demanding, only those students who have already demonstrated outstanding academic ability will be eligible for participation. Further, in order to be considered for honors status the student must meet the definition of gifted as approved by the North Providence School Committee. This definition states that a student is gifted if he "Possesses superior capabilities in the area(s) of general intelligence, and/or who has demonstrated specific academic aptitude in an academic area".

II. GOALS:

The Advisory Council on Gifted Education (ACGE) has adopted the following goals for the Honors Curriculum at North Providence High School:

1. To challenge those students identified as gifted to a higher level of academic performance;
2. To deepen the curriculum content for the academically talented;
3. To provide these students with in-depth training in a specific academic area as a preparation for college specialization;

4. To encourage and develop the student's ability to learn both critically and analytically;
5. To promote in the student a sense of personal responsibility for his own education;
6. To promote self-discipline through an intensive, highly demanding, and personal academic program;
7. To develop the kind of student who is willing and able to pursue knowledge beyond the limits of a more traditional academic program;
8. To teach students the methods of academic research, including the use of resource personnel;
9. To permit some students the opportunity to pursue learning that is important to him, at his own rate, through the use of Individualized Learning Programs (ILP's);
10. To permit some students alternative learning opportunities appropriate to his individual needs.

III. SELECTION PROCESS:

All students who wish to participate in either part of the Honors Curriculum (Honors Courses or ILP's) must be recommended by the Advisory Council on Gifted Education (ACGE), and approved by the principal of the high school. The ACGE is currently composed of the following individuals:

Edward Day, Chairman

Margaret Bierden
Thomas Cash
Mary Christian
Angelo Costabile
Rose Del Matto
C.Martha Frappier
Charles A. Gaffney
Marianne Heimbecker
Jeanette Roth
Dorothy Schofield

Anthony Pisano, Principal

The following procedure has been adopted for use in the screening process by the members of the ACGE:

1. During the month of January in each school year the Honors Coordinator will meet with eligible sophomores and juniors to discuss the Honors Curriculum. Immediately after this meeting an honors night will be held at the high school. All students who are interested in the Honors Curriculum, along with their parents, will be invited to the school to meet with the ACGE and the honors instructors. Course descriptions will be distributed, and each of the honors courses will be discussed by the appropriate instructor.

2. Students will have until February 1 to submit their application for the honors courses or for ILP. (See Appendix A).

3. The Honors Coordinator will collect all of the necessary data for presentation to the ACGE.

4. The ACGE will meet prior to the February vacation and review each application. The Council will compile a list of students recommended for honors status to be presented to the principal by the Honors Coordinator.

5. The Coordinator will present this list to the principal prior to the February vacation. After the principal has reviewed the recommendation and made whatever changes necessary, the Coordinator will post a list of those recommended for either honors courses or ILP's throughout the school.

6. Any student not accepted for honors will have one week after the February vacation to file an appeal. The Coordinator will meet with any student who wishes to appeal in an effort to gather any additional data that the student feels should be reviewed by the ACGE.

7. The Coordinator will convene a meeting of the ACGE and review all appeals. A final recommendation will be made to the principal, who will then make the final decision on each individual.

8. A final list of all students recommended for honors status will be posted by March 1.

IV. SELECTION CRITERIA:

The members of the ACGE have attempted to develop a flexible set of criteria so that each student seeking honors status will be given every opportunity to participate. Each student will be evaluated by the Council on the basis of the following criteria:

1. The student must have maintained an academic average of 87 or better in the area in which he is seeking honors status, OR, must have received a minimum grade of 83 in EACH course taken in the area in which he is seeking honors status. (Courses considered for this criteria are listed at the end of each course description in section VI.)
2. The student must be nominated by two teachers, perferably in the area in which he is seeking honors status. The student's accomplishment of this criteria will be based upon the scores achieved on the two nominations from the checklist questions found in Appendix B.
3. The student must have achieved above average scores on standardized tests, including the IOWA'S and the PSAT'S. (Specific test areas to be considered for this criteria are listed at the end of each course description in section VI).
4. The student might cite evidence of outstanding achievement and/or interest in the area in which he is seeking honors on Section 1 of the Student Application. If so, this evidence will be considered by the selection committee.

It is not necessary that students must meet all of the selection criteria listed above. Generally speaking, however, a student should meet at least three (3) of the four (4) criteria to insure his participation.

V. APPEAL PROCESS:

Any student who is denied admission to any honors program, or denied the opportunity to develop an ILP has the right to appeal the recommendation of the ACGE. To do so the individual must submit a formal letter of appeal (Appendix C), to the Honors Coordinator requesting that his case be reviewed. Upon receipt of this letter the Coordinator will meet with the student to determine whether the student has any additional information that he would want considered. Within one week of the original posting of the list of those accepted the coordinator will convene a meeting of the ACGE for the purpose of reviewing all appeals. The Council will review each case, and make a final recommendation to the principal. The Coordinator will convey these recommendations to the principal, who will then render the final decision on each appeal.

VI. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:

HONORS AMERICAN HISTORY

The Honors American history course is open to both juniors and seniors, and is offered as an in-depth survey into the major interpretive themes of modern historical scholarship. The course is designed to prepare students for intermediate and advanced college courses in American history. (The major text book used in this course is used by sophomores and/or juniors in many major colleges)..

Work requirements for Honors American history are demanding, and include the following weekly assignments:

1. Read one assigned chapter from the basic text;
2. Analyze a series of primary and secondary source documents, and write an essay interpreting these documents;
3. Write an essay response to a question provided by the instructor that focuses on the weeks' work;
4. Answer a battery of thirty (30) multiple choice questions on the reading from the basic text.

On the average, students should be prepared to spend at least one (1) hour each night on the above activities. Since this work prepares students for the Advanced Placement (AP) American history exam administered each spring, students are encouraged to take the test.

When evaluating a student for admission into the Honors American history program the ACGE will consider the student's grades in English I and English II, ancient or modern European history (if applicable), standardized test scores in the reading comprehension and social studies areas, and the verbal score from the PSAT.

HONORS CALCULUS

The Honors calculus course introduces students to the study of elementary functions, the concepts of analytic geometry, and the principles of differential and integral calculus. Emphasis is placed on basic concepts in both theory and application.

In additionato daily homework assignments, the student will be given outside reading and occasional special assignments. Homework will be in the form of problems from both the basic and supplemental texts. Chapter, mid-term, and final exams will be given. In addition, students may wish to take the calculus Advanced Placement (AP) test administered in the spring.

When evaluating a student for admission into the Honors calculus program the ACGE will consider the student's grades in Algebra I and II, geometry, and especially advanced math (which is considered a pre-requisite for the calculus course). In addition, the Council will consider the student's standardized test scores in the areas of mathematics aptitude and verbal reasoning, and the quantative score from the PSAT.

HONORS CHEMISTRY

The Honors chemistry program is designed to be the equivalent of a first-year college general chemistry course. The program is an extension of the college preparatory chemistry course, which is a pre-requisite for Honors chemistry.

The emphasis in Honors chemistry is on chemical problem solving, and consequently a strong background in mathematics is essential. The class meets seven (7) times each week, including three (3) hours of lecture, and four (4) hours of lab work. Tests will constitute 60% of the student's grade, and lab reports the other 40%.

When evaluating a student for admission into the Honors chemistry program the ACGE will consider the student's grades in all math courses taken, in physical science (if applicable), and in college prepatory chemistry. In addition, the Council will consider the student's standardized test scores in the areas of mathematics and science aptitude, and the quantative score on the PSAT.

HONORS EARLY ENROLLMENT (RIC) ENGLISH

The Early Enrollment English (EEE) course is taught in conjunction with the English Department at Rhode Island College. Students admitted to this program will take two (2) one-semester courses at the high school, and upon successful completion of each of these courses, will receive up to eight (8) semester hours of credit in English from RIC. (For further details concerning the college credits offered with this program students should see either the Honors Coordinator or the Chairperson of the English Department).

The two courses taught in the EEE program are:

ENGLISH 112: APPROACHES TO FICTION

This course will analyze the content and form of a variety of short stories and novels. There will be a mid-term and final exam, as well as several short essay tests administered during the semester.

ENGLISH 113: APPROACHES TO DRAMA

This course will deal with fifteen (15) plays, both tragic and comic, spanning in time from ancient Greece to the present. In addition to the discussion of these plays in class, students will be provided with the opportunity of viewing several plays as live performances. Course work will included the reading of all plays, the writing of four(4) short papers, and a mid-term and final exam.

When evaluating students for admission into the Honors Early Enrollment English program the ACGE will consider the student's grades in all previously taken English courses, as well as his scores in all verbal sections of both the IOWA's and the PSAT. (Students may take the AP test in the spring).

HONORS ENGLISH

This course will be offered every other year beginning in the 1982-83 school year, and will be open to any student who would normally be taking English IV or senior English electives. Since the primary emphasis in this program is on writing, students should have already taken extensive work in the college preparatory English course before seeking admission.

The work load in this program will involve a considerable amount of writing, based upon the themes studied in a variety of literary works. One of the primary goals of this course is to prepare students for the Advanced Placement (AP) exam administered every spring.

When evaluating a student for admission to the Honors English course the ACGE will consider the student's grades in all other English classes previously taken. (Because the work in this program is demanding, it is adviseable that students who plan to apply be in the college preparatory level one (1) courses in their first three years of English). In addition, the Council will consider the student's standardized test scores in all the

verbal areas on both the IOWA's and the PSAT.

HONORS HUMANITIES

The Honors humanities program is open to both juniors and seniors, and involves a study of man's culture from ancient to modern times. The course is essentially an introduction to philosophy, and deals with such topics as the Nature of Man and the Universe, the Nature of God, Good and Evil, and Fate vs. Free Will. One quarter of the program is concerned with a study of the worlds' major religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

During the first three (3) quarters students will do extensive reading and several long essay writings. During the fourth quarter all students will participate in an independent study project on some aspect of man's culture discussed in the other three quarters. There will be no regular classes during the fourth quarter, since all students will be involved in some type of research.

When evaluating a student for admission into the Honors humanities program the ACGE will consider his grades in all English courses taken, and in social studies electives including Honors American history, American studies, ancient or modern Europe, psychology and sociology. In addition, the Council will consider the student's standardized test scores in the verbal and social studies areas, and the verbal score on the PSAT.

HONORS POLITICAL SCIENCE

This program is open to seniors, and is taken in lieu of American government. It is designed for the student who would like a more detailed and practical involvement in the process of government than can be offered by the traditional American government course. Students will be expected to acquire a working knowledge of federal, state and local governments, through an in-depth study of the US Constitution, State laws and charters, and local ordinances.

Since this course is a practical politics course, students will be expected to periodically attend after-school meetings of such agencies as the State Legislature, the Town Council, and the local School Committee. In addition, the class will sponsor and direct the annual Student Government Day.

When evaluating a student for participation in the Honors Political Science course the ACGE will consider his grades in all English courses, his American history grade, and his grades in all social studies electives. In addition , the Council will consider his standardized test scores in the verbalcomprehension and social studies areas, and his verbal score on the PSAT.

VII. INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING PROGRAMS (ILP's):

The purpose of ILP is to permit a limited number of academically superior students an opportunity to develop a program of studies unique to the individual's needs and talents. An option for ILP will be available only to those seniors who have already demonstrated outstanding academic achievement, and who have educational needs that cannot be accomodated by the traditional or honors curricula.

Students who wish to develop an ILP must submit an application to the ACGE at the same time that applications are being accepted for honors courses. (See Appendix D). An individual who wishes to develop an ILP must be endorsed by three (3) teachers, at least two of whom are in the same area where the student plans to work. Further, the student must demonstrate to the ACGE, through a personal narrative, the relationship and need to work outside the regular curriculum to his college and/or career goals.

Once a student has been recommended for ILP he will meet with the Honors Coordinator to develop his Plan of Study (See Appendix E). The actual program may take one of several forms, including the following:

1. A student may work under a CONTRACT, with a faculty member from the appropriate academic area as a sponsor and advisor. (See Appendix F) Before commencing on the ILP the final contract must be approved by the principal.
2. An ILP seminar in the social sciences, under the direction of the honors coordinator, may be offered if there are a sufficient number of students interested. This program will individualize instruction through the use of Learning Kits in American history, Consumer Education (Survival Skills), Economics, and Sociology. Each student will develop an ILP that will include specific tasks in any or all of these areas.
3. In a situation where an individual student's needs cannot be met by either of the above alternatives, the coordinator will attempt to place the student in an appropriate course at one of the local colleges.

Grading for any ILP will be dependent upon the amount of time spent on the work. Under the contract approach the sponsor/advisor will be responsible for grading the student's work.

VIII APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE APPLICATION

To the applicant: Please type all information:

Student's name: _____

Course for which you are applying: _____

List (if applicable) any other honors courses for which you are applying: _____

_____

_____

List (if applicable) any honors courses you have taken, or are presently taking: _____

_____

Please list the names of two (2) teachers (perferably in the same area as this course) whom you feel can best judge your ability to perform in this course: _____

_____

One criteria that the ACGE will consider when assessing your application is evidence of achievement and/or interest in the area for which you are seeking honors status. Please list any clubs, groups, organizations, either in or out of school, or any awards, that you feel demonstrates achievement and/or interest in the area for which you are seeking honors status.

Please write an essay of approximately 100 words describing how the course for which you are seeking honors status relates to your future college and/or career goals.

Please list any courses you have taken or are taking in the same general area for which you seek honors status; List

NAME OF COURSE	TEACHER(S)	PRESENT OR FINAL GRADE

Under the terms of the RIGHT TO PRIVACY ACT (Buckley Amendment) a student and/or his parent must give permission to anyone using information taken from his permanent record card. The Council has found that it is helpful to know who the individual is in assessing his application. If you are willing to permit the Council to view your records, please type the following statement on your application, and both you and your parent sign:

> I (we) waive the right to confidentiality so that all of the members of the ACGE may have access to the data on my permanent record card.

Student signature, _____

Parent or guardian signature, _____

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE TEACHER NOMINATION FORM:

Nominating teacher _____

Student nominated _____

Dear colleague: The above named student is seeking your nomination for participation in the honors _____ course. The members of the ACGE would appreciate it if you would complete the following rating scale on this student.

---

1. indicates outstanding ability in the area
2. indicates above average ability in the area
3. indicates average ability in the area
4. indicates below average a ility in the area
5. indicates poor ability in the area

_____ 1. Degree of self-motivation

_____ 2. Ability to work independently

_____ 3. Regular attendance in class

_____ 4. Punctual completion of daily assignments

_____ 5. Quality of the work submitted

_____ 6. Writing ability, and general use of the language

_____ 7. Acceptance of responsibility for his schoolwork

_____ 8. Your overall assessment of this student's potential for success in an honors level program.

NARRATIVE: The ACGE would appreciate any additional comments that you feel would be helpful in evaluating this student for participation in an honors level course.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE LETTER OF APPEAL:

Name of student _____

Program for which appeal is being made _____

Please indicate why you feel that the decision not to accept you into the above course should be reviewed by the ACGE:

Please list any additional data (not included on your original application) that you feel should be considered by the ACGE when it reviews your case.

Please list any teachers and/or counsellors whom the Honors Coordinator should contact for additional information concerning your ability to perform in an honors level course.

Student's signature _____

Date appeal filed _____

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE APPLICATION FOR ILP:

Student's name _____

Academic area in which you plan to develop an ILP _____

Please list the names of three (3) teachers whom you feel will nominate for ILP. (At least two (2) of these teachers must be in the area where you plan to develop your ILP).

_____

_____

_____

NARRATIVE: Please write an essay, of 100-200 words in length, describing why you feel you should be permitted to develop an ILP. You should indicate the nature of the work you plan to do under an ILP, why you cannot do this work as part of the traditional and/or honors curricula, and how this work relates to your plans for college and/or future career.

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE ILP PLAN OF STUDY:

Student's name _____

Academic area of ILP _____

Indicate (if applicable) the name of the teacher(s) who will serve as your advisor _____

Please write an essay of approximately 250 words describing in detail the nature of the work you will be performing. This essay should indicate where you will work, what materials (if any) you will need, how long the work will take, (in weeks), and the final project you will submit for evaluation.

APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE ILP CONTRACT:

Student's name _____

Faculty advisor's name _____

Please describe in detail the nature of the work to be performed by the student.

Please list, as accurately as possible, the amount of time (in weeks) that will be required to complete the work listed above.

Please describe the method(s) that will be used to evaluate this work. (Eg. Tests, research paper, project, etc.)

Please indicate where the student will work during the period of the ILP.

It is necessary for both the student and the faculty advisor to agree to, and sign this contract. Further, it should be understood that the time block listed above is not flexible. The student must complete the work in the time indicated, unless both he and his advisor submit a letter to the honors coordinator indicating the reasons why more time is needed.

IX STATEMENT OF ADOPTION

The Honors Curriculum, as outlined in the preceeding pages, has been adopted by the North Providence School Committee, for inclusion in the North Providence High School Course of Study commencing in the 1981-1982 academic year.

Frank Iafrate, Chairman

Leon J. Heureux, Ed.D., Supt.

Anthony C. Pisano, Principal

Edward J. Day, Honors Coord.

Date adopted 1/28/81